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ABSTRACT

School restructuring is a major concern of administrators. Because of America's pluralistic society, restructured schools should develop equal educational opportunity for all and an appreciation for diversity. Strategic planning is one process used in school restructuring. School restructuring has had different goals throughout educational history. More recently, reform has been qualitative, with emphasis on what is taught and learned. The administrator's role is important in determining if all students benefit from restructuring. Administrators need to be aware of their different constituencies and their knowledge, power, and resource differences. Research on multicultural education has tended to focus on equal educational opportunity, on curriculum and instructional issues, or on examples of restructured schools for multicultural education. The global economy, a growing and aging population, and increased awareness of diversity all have complicated education planning. Strategic planning's longer time periods, flexibility, and inclusiveness can help meet these challenges. A small-city school system in the Southeast that used strategic planning involved a broad range of stakeholders, established goals, and had persons responsible for different areas. However, the composition of participants did not adequately represent the diversity of the community. (Contains 17 references.) (JPT)

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Strategic Planning for Multicultural Education

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Running head: STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Planning for Multicultural Education Introduction

Restructuring schools is a major concern facing school administrators. Because American schools exist in a pluralistic society, restructured schools should develop "equal educational opportunity" for all students and teach students an appreciation for diversity. Not only do school administrators need to plan for multicultural issues, but also school administrators need to plan strategies that prepare students to enter a changing society (global economy, information oriented, etc.). Meeting these demands places an increased burden on the school administrator to carefully develop the mission of a school system.

Carefully planning the direction that a school district will follow raises other questions. For example, how will the planning take place and who will be involved in the planning process? Answers to these question have implications for both the utility, quality and diversity of the educational program.

A planning process used by the business sector, and now the educational sector, is strategic planning. Strategic planning is a process to define and create a better future for individuals (students), school systems, and society (Kaufman and Herman, 1991). This process of planning may result in a major overhaul to a school system as opposed to the addition of a course here and there. To plan such an overhaul, major stakeholders need to be identified and their input gathered.

The purpose of this paper is to briefly review some literature regarding restructuring, multicultural education, and planning

processes for restructuring schools. As a final purpose, the author of this paper analyzes a school district's attempt at restructuring and identifies three unique features found in this particular planning process (ideas seminar, town meetings, community involvement).

Restructuring Schools

Restructuring schools or reforming schools has been an issue for generations (Warren, 1990). From the common school movement to the progressive school movement (1800's to 1920's), reformers have sought to educate and improve the education of America's children. One of the purposes of educating America's children was to reduce the social inequities found in other countries (Tesconi, & Hurwitz, 1974). Reforming schools in the 1950's and 1960's was spearheaded by interrelated political and economic aims. Politically, reformers believed that "... the best available way a democratically inclined state could overcome gross disparities rooted in past prejudices and socioeconomic injustices was by a massive expansion in education" (Coombs, 1985, p. 66). Economically, reformers adopted the view that "...national growth flowed from technological progress and increasing labor productivity, which in turn flowed from progress in formal education" (Coombs, 1985, p.67).

More recently, reform efforts have taken on a qualitative dimension which is described as relevance of what is taught and learned (Coombs, 1985). Relevance, during the latter reform movements of the eighties, could be described as placing an

emphasis on students, their culture, and their present and future needs. Murphy (1990) identified three waves of reform in the eighties describing the third wave as focusing on the "... structures for the delivery of services to children ..." (p. 29). These recent efforts have been undertaken to close the gap between the knowledge students learn in schools and students utilizing knowledge to communicate in meaning ways and to solve problems (Parks & Sayers, 1992).

Another way to view the restructuring issue is through themes or patterns that have emerged. Wehlage, Smith and Lipman (1992) identified four patterns of school restructuring from their literature review. The first pattern is used to describe student activities in school. These activities include "... the quality of curriculum instruction, assessment, school climate, discipline, and student support in non academic areas" (p. 52). A second pattern of school restructuring concerns the work design (roles and responsibilities) of teachers. Breaking with the traditional subordinate role for teachers, a transformed role would have teachers "... work more collegially and be more involved in making decisions about a number of school matters..." (p.52). Essentially, this pattern is about empowerment of teachers in the decision-making process (Rinehart & Short, 1991).

The third pattern of school restructuring is best described as sharing the governance processes among significant stakeholders. Strategies such as school councils are recommended "to redistribute decision-making authority with the intent of making schools more

responsive, effective, and accountable" to parents and other stakeholders (Wehlage, et al., 1992, p. 53). As an example, the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 legislates school councils in all Kentucky schools. Finally, the fourth pattern is characterized by the integration of community resources, such as health and social services, to enhance at-risk students'achievement. The underlying "assumption is that these resources can succeed in providing youth with the additional support and experiences they need to succeed academically" (p. 53).

The above descriptions of school restructuring left out one of the most important aspects to the process. Specifically, little attention was paid to school leadership or to other stakeholders involved in the restructuring process. School administrator must be aware of the unique knowledge, power, and biases that different individuals bring to planning the restructuring effort.

Scheurich and Imber (1991) stated that individuals who administer the restructuring process make or recommend policy decisions about scare educational resources. These policies may benefit some students, usually based on race or gender, more than other students. Those who plan the restructuring process need to be attentive to the community constituencies and to their differences in knowledge, power, and resources. Given that a fair distribution of constituencies are present during the restructuring effort, a planning strategy to ensure that a "... democratic process of deliberation and negotiation about what kind of

individuals and society public education should foster ..." (Howe, 1992, p. 469) is needed.

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is receiving needed attention in many journals. Content in a small sample of recent articles took one of three themes. These articles either reflected on equal educational opportunity (Howe, 1992;Bullard, 1992), focused on curriculum and instructional issues (Kemp, 1992;Williams & Pollard, 1992;Reissman, 1991), or presented examples of restructured schools for multicultural education (Wehlage, et al., 1992).

Bullard (1991) identified four goals of multicultural education. These goals simply stated are:

1. all groups of students will experience an equal opportunity to learn in school.
2. all students will develop positive attitudes toward other students.
3. all students will be taught decision-making and social skills.
4. students will "develop cross-cultural dependency and view themselves from the perspectives of different groups" (p.5).

Gollnick and Chinn (1990) indicated a fifth goal as follows:

5. students will "value cultural differences while realizing that individuals across cultures have many similarities" (p. 2).

These goals, obviously, are desirable for any group of students regardless of racial, ethnic, social, or cultural characteristics.

Given that the above are acceptable goals for multicultural education, it is essential that persons in the planning process have diverse backgrounds to reflect these goals. If only individuals from a dominant culture plan the restructuring of a

school system, the goals developed in the process may represent only the needs of students from the dominant culture. Not only should a diverse group be involved in a restructuring process, but also they should be aware of three pivotal issues regarding equal educational opportunity.

To achieve multicultural goals in a restructured school, the planners should consider the following issues in attempting to accommodate equality of educational opportunity (Howe, 1992). These issues were: freedom and opportunities worth wanting; equal educational opportunity as enabling, and equal educational opportunity and children (pp. 459-462). The first, freedom and opportunities worth wanting, referred to being able to deliberate about choices in schools and having the opportunity to exercise deliberation about those choices. Often students are counseled into a academic track that they really do not want or do not have the knowledge to understand how the academic track will influence their future life.

A second issue raised by Howe (1992) concerned education as a force to enable students to obtain societal goods such as "... employment, adequate income, and political power" (p. 460). A chain of opportunity seemed to exist from equal educational opportunity to equal opportunity (career). Howe (1992) indicated that equal educational opportunity should relate to career, otherwise the educational opportunities may not be worth wanting.

The third issue discussed by Howe (1992) was equal educational opportunity and children. Essentially, the discussion was

concerned with young children being unable to deliberate and not knowing what was worth wanting. Therefore, it is up to parents and schools to interfere for the childrens' best interest until they are prepared to deliberate.

Comparisons of Planning Processes

Careful planning by school administrators is essential to meet students' everchanging needs. Societal changes such as developing relations with other countries and global economies have challenged schools of the United States to rethink how students are educated and what kinds of skills these students should possess upon graduation. In addition, a population experiencing growth in the number of people, an increase in the average age of the people, and an increase in the awareness of the diversity of the people create additional challenges for educating todays' students. Given the complex environment awaiting graduates of the public schools, school administrators need to attend to planning processes.

Lewis (1983) identified three types of planning available to school leaders. These types of planning differ according to time spent on the plan and the situation that requires planning. First, problem-solving planning is usually of a short duration (perhaps one to two months) and is caused by a disruption in the normal routine. Second, operational planning is of a longer duration (perhaps a year) and is initiated by a desire to improve the school's performance level. Third, strategic planning may span a time period from five to 10 years and is initiated by a desire to achieve a mission and educational goals. Both operational planning

and strategic planning may be used as tools to maximize schools' effectiveness and efficiency.

A strategic plan has certain advantages over operational planning. For example, strategic planners take into account the uncertain future and develop a vision for "what could be" (Herman, 1990). Other advantages of strategic planning over operational planning include recognition that teachers and administrators need to be motivated and committed to the school district and policies; recognition that the school administrators must consider the stakeholders in the community; recognition that all phases of the school program must be analyzed to improve student learning and growth; and recognition that the environment can have as much of an effect on school progress as teachers, programs and services (Lewis, 1983). Because of these advantages strategic planning has been applied in some form by many school leaders.

Although the steps to strategic planning are well documented, some school administrators have not properly utilized the strategic planning process (Lyman, 1990; McCune, 1986). Administrators in higher education institutions that have used "bona fide" strategic planning reported more satisfaction with the process, better results from the process, and an increase in available funds after a six-year period (Lyman, 1990). Thus, it may be important for secondary school administrators to adhere to the steps in the strategic planning process. Kaufman and Herman (1992) have described the steps as follows:

1. Decide upon the initial focus of the strategic plan (society, school building, or school system).
2. Develop a set of belief or value statements.
3. Identify the critical success factors.
4. Conduct internal and external scans.
5. Develop vision and mission statements.
6. Conduct strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis.
7. Develop strategic goals and strategic objectives.
8. Develop and operate action plans.
9. Monitor and evaluate.

The issue of who is involved in the strategic planning process has been addressed in different ways. For example, Lewis (1983) indicates that there are internal and external stakeholders that may be involved in the planning process in an informal or formal way. Kaufman, et al. (1992) suggest identifying planning partners to be involved in the planning process. However, both authors are silent as to how to select the participants.

A Case of Strategic Planning

The purpose of this section is to describe a strategic planning process in a small city school system with the assistance of two consultants. The administrators and board of education in this school system sought to enhance educational opportunities for a diverse student population. Although the process of strategic planning is not new, several unique features were developed and implemented during this project that were not mentioned in the description of strategic planning. Unique features to the process included extensive community involvement (The Committee of 107), an idea seminar, and town meetings. These features will be explained in the strategic planning process. Following is a brief

description of the geographic location, student population, the strategic planning process, community members, and outcomes.

Description of the Geographic Location

The school system is located in a state within the Southeastern Region of the United States. The community in which the school system is located has a population of about 25,000 citizens and is adjoined by another small city with a population of another 25,000 citizens. These communities are considered to be on the edge of the black belt. Community members have easy access to major metropolitan areas due to an interstate highway even though the communities are surrounded by a vast rural area. A major university is located within the city limits which enrolls between 21,000 and 22,000 students annually.

Description of the Student Population.

There are approximately 3600 students attending this school system. Students are from a diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The student diversity is partially due to children of the university faculty attending the local school system. For example, students represent 30 different countries and speak 15 different languages. Additional characteristics of the student population are: 41% (1492) are minority, 27.4% (987) are receiving free or reduced lunches, and 12.5% (450) are handicapped and receive special education services.

A range of student achievement is evident in the school system. On the negative side, approximately 20% of the kindergarten students are retained each year. On the positive

side, 20% of the students are eligible for accelerated programs.

Description of the Strategic Planning Process

Major Stakeholder Involvement

At an initial meeting of the administrators and consultants, nine major stakeholder groups in the community with interest in the school system were identified. These nine stakeholder groups were: the university, business and professional, governmental, ministerial, parents, retired citizens, students and alumni, support staff, and teachers. Group members were selected by individuals (non-school) who were identified as a leaders of their respective groups. After the selection process was completed, the groups were found to range in size from nine members to 14 members.

A total of 107 individuals were identified to serve on the nine groups. At a meeting of all 107 individuals, the purpose of the strategic planning was explained, strategic planning processes were explained, and dates were presented for the various steps in the strategic planning process. The consultants and superintendent indicated the purpose of the strategic planning process was to enable the school system to better serve all students. This point was emphasized by several of the individuals present, especially the minority members. Thus, a tone for multicultural education was immediately established.

Ideas Seminar

Prior to any of the nine group meetings, a special Ideas Seminar was held for members of all nine groups. The Southern Regional Educational Board provided four speakers that would

presented ideas about the future of schooling, the economy, technology, and vocational education. These speakers were well received and provided useful information for the group meetings that followed. In fact, some of the members desired additional input from acknowledged authorities.

Each of the nine groups met and identified characteristics of the local school district that should exist in the future. Characteristics were solicited from each member of the group and were listed on newsprint. A nominal group technique was used to select characteristics of major interest. This process took approximately two hours for each group.

Following the identification of future characteristics, the groups spent another two hours assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) for the school system. Based upon the conclusions of the SWOT's exercise, the groups identified strategic issues that would need to be managed to implement their vision for the school system. Finally, each group elected two representatives to serve on the Local School System Strategic Planning Committee (18 members). This committee would develop the strategic plan for the school system.

The Strategic Planning Committee met for three weekends (beginning Friday noon and ending Saturday afternoon) to develop the strategic plan for the school system. A mission, vision, values, issues, and goals to address the major issues were developed. A theme that was evident during the discussions was concern for diversity and multicultural education.

The Values

A total of six value statements about education were established by the Strategic Planning Committee. Of the six, three value statements relate directly to multicultural education (equal educational opportunity) and diversity. They are:

1. Each child in this community is entitled to a high quality education.
2. Each child is entitled to equal opportunities to learn and grow.
3. Mutual respect and an appreciation of individual differences are essential to a positive educational climate and should be fostered in the schools and in the community.

The Vision

The vision (see Appendix A) was mutually agreed upon by the Steering Committee. In fact, they took ownership in the vision as an outside writer's attempt to change the format of the written vision resulted in a return to their exact wording. Items listed in the vision that relate to multicultural education included respect for the richness of diversity, meeting the individual needs of each student, and a safe environment that nurture self-esteem.

The Issues

There were eight issues identified that needed management to allow implementation of the vision developed by the Strategic Planning Committee. These are: curriculum, community involvement, family involvement, expectations of students, funding, staff, safe environment, and facilities, equipment, and transportation. Three of these issues (curriculum, expectations of students, and safe environment) contain goals and objectives that relate directly to

diversity and multicultural education as well as preparation for the changing job market.

For example, under the curriculum issue a strategy to support the theme of multicultural education was the development of African American studies. Again, under the curriculum issue a strategy to address the needs of handicapped children and "at-risk" children was developed. Finally, under the curriculum issue a boarder strategy of developing a multicultural education program in grades K-12 was suggested. Objectives for this strategy included viewing concepts, issues, events, and themes from a multicultural perspective, and developing in-service programs for teachers, supervisors, and curriculum directors.

Additionally, the concern for diversity was found under the expectation for students issue. Objectives indicated that the teacher's role was to teach respect for self and others, and to foster an awareness of social problems.

Town Meetings

Continuing with the strategic planning process, a town meeting was held to present the plan to interested community members and to seek additional input. Each town meeting was televised on a local cable channel. Community members addressed the Steering committee through microphones in each aisle.

During the first town meeting, issues concerning the length of the school year and more specificity regarding management of the major issues led to a second town meeting. To address the concerns of the community members, each principal selected (or was assigned)

an issue for which they developed strategies for implementation. The principals met on two different days to share their strategies with each other and to gain information regarding all levels of the school system. When the principals completed their task, the Steering Committee (18 members) reviewed the principal's strategies prior to presenting them at the second Town Meeting. A general concern was that the strategies did not adequately address the Strategic Planning Committee's concern for multicultural education. These strategies were reviewed, revised and finally accepted by the Strategic Planning Committee.

Outcomes

Several outcomes are evident from the strategic planning process.

1. The Strategic Planning Committee has taken ownership of the process and desire to see their plan implemented.
2. The board of education has adopted the plan and has committed resources to implement the plan.
3. A central office position has been identified to implement the plan
4. Eight issues for implementation have been identified.
5. Goals and objectives have been identified for each issue.
6. Strategies have been developed to implement the goals and objectives.
7. Once implemented, each strategy can and will be evaluated.
8. Each strategy has a starting date and a person(s) to implement the strategy. Several strategies begin during the Summer of 1992.

Caveats

Even though there are many strengths to this school districts attempt to plan for the future, there are also some weaknesses. First, the principals were not directly involved in the development

of the values and vision. They did have input when the strategies were developed, however, it did not appear that they had bought into the overall plan. Because of this lack of input a second caveat developed. The principals did not really restructure existing relationships at the individual schools. They tended to utilize strategies or structures that already existed.

A third caveat was that the selection process may have been flawed as the demographics of the participants did not match the demographics of the community. Specifically, the proportions of minority to majority were not realistic. More attention should have been paid to race, gender, ethnic groups, handicapped, etc. during the selection process. As a result the plan may be biased to meet the needs of the dominant majority. Caveat four follows as a corollary to caveat three in that the make up of the Steering Committee was largely white with a good mix of male and female members. However, only three of the 18 Steering Committee members were minority (one Asian and two black).

Concluding Thoughts

There are elements of this case of strategic planning that have potential for other situations. For example, the identification of the various stakeholder groups allow for a broad range of input, holding town meetings to gather additional input, and providing an "ideas seminar." These ideas may strengthen attempts at planning restructuring processes.

Regarding the goals set forth by Bullard (1991) and Gollnick and Chinn (1990), it appears that there was a concern for all

students receiving an "equal educational opportunity," and developing respect for other students. However, there was a lack of concern about students viewing themselves from the perspective of a different culture.

There was a definite push to create opportunities worth wanting and to make the learning relevant in the educational setting. Because of the presence of Steering Committee members from the business and professional sectors, education was seen as linking strongly to careers. Some of the committee (mainly minority members) recognized the need to be able to deliberate about choices in schools. Essentially, they were concerned that minority students were not informed of choices that they could make.

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Appendix A

VISION STATEMENT

As citizens of Auburn, we recognize the importance of creating an environment which will achieve excellence in education. We recognize that education begins in the home environment prior to school age and requires the sustained involvement of each child's family as well as teachers, staff, and community.

Our Vision

A school system which respects the richness of diversity

A challenging curriculum that emphasizes the highest level of achievement which meets the individual needs of each student and integrates the arts, humanities, and sciences, technology, athletics, physical fitness, and student activities

A safe environment that nurtures self-esteem, personal growth, and responsible decision-making

Students who are taught to learn, to reason, and to value learning as a life-long process

Graduates who are responsible citizens and who are intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally prepared to participate in an international community and a global economy

A community that expects and rewards high levels of performance by faculty and staff

An educational process that encourages mutual respect and fairness in relationships among students, parents, teachers, and staff

An environment that will attract and keep energetic, creative, tough-minded, highly motivated faculty and staff